

## Frequently asked questions

### Why do you need to test the water?

Waukesha County Parks is committed to giving our customers the best swim experience; making safety our first priority.

Testing for Water Quality is done weekly at all Waukesha County Beaches and twice at Fox Brook and Menomonee Parks. Water is also tested after a heavy rainfall. The County has tested water quality since 1970, before there were any state guidelines for testing. Water quality testing is done as a precaution to warn customers when bacteria levels are high.

### What are you testing for?

Beach water may contain microorganisms that you cannot see. One of those microorganisms is *E. coli*. *E. coli* is found in feces of animals, including humans.

### What is *E. coli*?

*E. coli* is the abbreviated name for *Escherichia coli*. The name *E. coli* encompasses a wide range of bacteria, some which help us and some of which hurts us. About 0.1% of the total bacteria within an adult's intestines is represented by *E. coli*. The presence of *E. coli* and other bacteria within our intestines is necessary for us to develop and operate properly. *E. coli* we acquire from our surroundings can sometimes be harmful to us. The presence of *E. coli* in swimming areas means that other disease-causing microorganisms may be present as well.



### What illness can I get from swimming in polluted water?

Micro organisms found in polluted water can cause flu-like systems, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, and fever. Other germs can cause ear infections, eye infections, and skin rashes. Due to the Waukesha County's water sampling and beach closing procedures, exposure to potential causes of illness is reduced.

### When do you close the beach?

Beaches will be closed and appropriate signage posted when:

- At least one of the samples has an *E. coli* count greater than 1000. Additional samples will be taken immediately and the beach will reopen only when two consecutive days have counts below 1000.

### When are beach advisories posted?

- If both samples have *E. coli* counts over 235 or if one sample over a two day period has an *E. coli* count over 235. Additional samples will be taken immediately and the beach advisory will remain in place until two consecutive days have counts below 235.

### What causes beach pollution?

There are many sources of *E. coli* bacteria, including the following:

- Animal droppings from geese, dogs, etc.
- Runoff from residential streets and yards
- Children having "accidents" in the water

### What can I do to reduce *the E. coli* levels at Waukesha County Beaches?

♦ Please do not swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for kids in diapers. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.

♦ Please do not swallow the water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth.

♦ Please practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing a diaper. Germs on your body end up in the water.

♦ Please take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.

♦ Please change diapers in a bathroom and not on the beach. It is suggested to use rubber pants or swim diapers while swimming.

♦ Please wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Everyone has invisible amounts of fecal matter on their bottoms that end up in the water.

♦ Please do not feed the geese or other waterfowl.

♦ Please do not bring your pet on the beach and properly dispose of your pet's waste.

## Waukesha County's Procedures for Collecting Water Samples

- Water samples are taken by lifeguards on Sunday during peak use (@ 3:00 p.m.) in sterile bottles provided by the Waukesha County Environmental Health Division. Fox Brook and Menomonee Parks also take an additional sample on Tuesday during peak use (@3:00 p.m.)
- Two samples at each beach location are taken from designated points.
- On Monday, samples are taken to the Parks Program Specialist at the County Administration Building by each Park Foreman and then to the lab at the Waukesha County Environmental Health Division no later than 10:00 a.m. Fox Brook and Menomonee Parks also transport the second weekly samples into the office on Wednesday mornings before 10:00 a.m.
- Samples are also taken within a minimum of 12 hours and a maximum of 24 hours AFTER a heavy rainfall (determined by ½ inch of rain received in rain gauge at park).

A complete list of testing procedures and the weekly results are posted on-line at [www.waukeshacountyparks.com](http://www.waukeshacountyparks.com) or at each beach house.



## Beach Hours:

11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. weekdays  
10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. weekends & holidays  
Hours are extended to 8 p.m. on days  
when temperature is projected over 90°



## Waukesha County Beach Locations

- Fox Brook Park
- Menomonee Park
- Minooka Park
- Muskego Park
- Mukwonago Park
- Naga-Waukee Park

## BEACH RULES & REGULATIONS

- ▶ Swimming in designated areas only.
- ▶ Swimming permitted only when lifeguard is on duty; follow lifeguard's instructions.
- ▶ Children 5 years old or younger **MUST** be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages not permitted.
- ▶ Floatation devices, face masks, and diving equipment prohibited.
- ▶ No animals allowed.
- ▶ No glass containers allowed.
- ▶ Proper swimming attire required.
- ▶ Grilling permitted in designated areas only.
- ▶ No fishing tackle permitted.
- ▶ No running dives.

## PARK FEES & RESERVATIONS (262) 548-7801

For additional information and reservations contact:  
**WAUKESHA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
PARKS AND LAND USE**  
1320 Pewaukee Road, Room 230 Waukesha, WI 53188  
Phone (262) 548-7801; Fax (262) 896-8071  
For a 24 hour recorded activity report, call (262) 548-7800  
TDD available (262) 896-8075

[www.waukeshacountyparks.com](http://www.waukeshacountyparks.com)

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In case of emergency, dial 911. To contact the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department, dial (262) 548-7111

## WAUKESHA COUNTY PARK SYSTEM

# Beach Water Quality Testing Procedures

## 2004

*Yours Naturally!*



**Waukesha County Park System**  
Recreation • Education • Preservation

[www.waukeshacountyparks.com](http://www.waukeshacountyparks.com)